

Words are wind: using Du Bois and Bourdieu to ‘unveil’ the capricious nature of gifted and talented programs.

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Abstract

Concerns over students of color gaining access to gifted education programs have persisted for decades; and while numerous educators, policymakers, and researchers have deliberated about the underrepresentation of minority students in gifted education, few articles utilize a theoretical approach explicating this dilemma. This article seeks to fill this void, utilizing Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical Race Theory’s counter-story/testimonies to understand and illuminate the capricious nature of gifted and talented programs in Denver Public Schools. Using Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital and Du Bois’ analogy of the veil, the article demonstrates the role parents play in accessing gifted and talented programs and details how accessibility perpetuates racial disparities in schools that are lauded as being diverse and inclusive. Also discussed are issues of cultural capital, namely factors that enable and empower white parents and their respective students to remain in primarily white gifted education programs while excluding students of color. Finally, recommendations for changes to gifted and talented programs are offered.

Keywords: Critical Race Theory, Latino Critical Race Theory, Whiteness, Gifted and Talented, Du Bois, Bourdieu.

In his book *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Du Bois (1903) presciently said, “for the problem of the Twentieth century is the problem of the color-line” (p. v). Despite being written more than 100 years ago and the perceived racial progress we have made since, this statement is just as apropos in U.S. society today as it was then. Moreover, for many, the election of Barack Obama as the first African American President of the United States suggests that the United States has entered a post-racial era (Lopez, 2010), where race is no longer a determining factor in influencing one’s access to opportunities and quality resources. Nevertheless, race continues to be a factor in education, albeit coded in discursive synonyms like achievement gaps, free or reduced lunch, Title 1, and/or urban schools. Race is also a factor in the mere epistemologies of education. For example, many policy makers, administrators, and educators, who have and continue to be predominately white (see Sleeter, 2001), promulgate the belief that the failure of public schools, specifically, urban public schools, rests upon lazy students, apathetic parents, and lack of community caring. This type of rationale renders larger societal and structural mechanisms un-blameable while blaming the victims of their own educational plight. Furthermore, this type of logic codes the racialization of students of color, their parents and family, and the communities that they come from. Plainly stated, race, despite semantic avoidance (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2006), continues to play a role in schools as does parental interactions, and perceived lack thereof, with the public schools.

As Ravitch (2010) posits, “Education is a reflection of society...integrally related to the society in which it is embedded” (p. 285). Therefore, if schools are reflecting racial bias on students, parents, and communities then one could argue that this is merely a reflection of what is esteemed and embedded in our society at large^v. Needless to say, in education, the standards for which all students are measured against are culturally biased in favor of white, middle class students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). That is, academic success is measured by how closely a student aligns to white middle class values. Not having those same values, then puts a student at a disadvantage, a phenomenon that greatly impacts urban students of color, especially when examining gifted and talented programs (Ford, 1998).

As the title suggests, and borrowing from George R.R. Martin’s (2011) book *A Dance with Dragons: A Song of Ice and Fire*, “Words are wind” is an aphorism routinely used by the characters, suggesting that ‘actions speak louder than words’. A speaker says or thinks “words are wind” to suggest that someone’s speech has no weight to ground itself upon. This analytic paper draws on that aphorism to suggest that schools also embody a “words are wind” approach to gifted and talented (GT) programs. Similarly, for many parents, students, and critical educators public school propaganda around GT programs are seen as “wind” having negligible weight to them, simply a display with little to no mass or validity.

Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latino Critical Race Theory’s (LatCrit) notion of counter-storytelling/*testimonies* (Huber, 2010), this analytical paper examines the racial inequities regarding the number of identified GT students in the Denver Public School (DPS)

system. Furthermore, the paper utilizes Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital and Du Bois' analogy of the veil to: 1) theorize the potential role parents play in accessing GT programs; and 2) detail how in/accessibility perpetuates racial disparities and white racial dominance. Our goal in doing this analysis is not to generalize that all GT programs are terrible, but rather to unveil a counter narrative of one of the author's experience that is bolstered by racially segregated DPS GT data.

This paper begins with an explanation of methodology, followed by a discussion regarding the use of Du Bois' (1903) veil and Bourdieu's (1977) cultural capital as a guiding theoretical framework. After that, we share one of the author's counter narrative around GT programs, followed by a discussion around the racial inequities of GT and tracking programs in Denver Public Schools is presented. The paper will conclude with a discussion of white parental cultural capital and the racial impacts on GT programs with recommendations for racially-just GT programming.

The notion of cultural capital initially presented itself to me, in the course of research, as a theoretical hypothesis which made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes by relating academic success, i.e., the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions (p. 241).

Inherent in cultural capital is power (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu sees power as culturally and symbolically created, and constantly re-legitimized through an interaction of agency and structure. The main way this happens is through socialized norms or tendencies that guide behavior and thinking. Cultural capital is "the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them" (Navarro, 2006, p. 16). For many people of color, and those who are poor, access to these trained and structured forms of capital is limited and often unused due to the structures and institutional norms that limit exercising such influence. One simply needs to look into undocumented populations, who largely avoid any type of bureaucratic access, even if beneficial, for fear of deportation and thus severely limited their own capital. According to Dumais (2002), it is through the mechanisms of cultural capital that practice (agency) is interrelated with field (structure). For example, DiMaggio (1982) conveyed this connection of agency and structure over thirty years ago in showing how cultural capital and status positively impact grades of students. DiMaggio shows how dominant cultural participation, when shared by both students and parents with their teachers, can have significant positive impacts on students' grades. The expanding literature on whiteness suggests that the structure operates largely behind the backs of social actors and is reproduced/practiced more or less automatically (Lipsitz, 2006; Margonis, 2007). Bourdieu developed the concept of cultural capital to not only describe the ways in which cultural capital is in the social world, but also the

ways in which the social world is in cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977). Thus, one of the fundamental features of cultural capital is that it is embodied; it is not comprised uniquely of mental attitudes, which may elucidate why whites dominate GT spaces. It can be argued that whiteness is both agency and structure, embodied and socialized. As discussed above, the notion of the achievement gap is a worthy example of how cultural capital, and the lacking by people of color, manifests in whites as both agency and structure (i.e. right to lobby and disproportionate white teacher population) but also embodied and socialized (i.e. attitudes of entitlement and perceived giftedness).

While examining Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital and Du Bois' veil, we, the authors, were struck that embedded in the veil and double-consciousness was the notion of cultural capital and the presence of difference and power, especially in educative spaces. Not only a difference that demarcates based on the color line but one of agency, structure, and socialized norms. Du Bois(1903) describes African-Americans as “a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world— a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world.” (p. 2). It is in seeing oneself through the revelation of the white veil that the cultural capital of people of color is undermined and relegates them to second-class citizens. If people of color are to live with this double-consciousness, one that assigns value in conflicting identities, then linking notions of cultural capital and the veil are not only worthy, but also necessary.

Thus, drawing on studies of the ways cultural capital is manifested in social, cultural, political, legal, economic, and most importantly educational spheres, we now turn to how we conceptualize it in relation to DPS GT programs.

Unveiling Gifted and Talented Programs Using Counter narrative/Testimony

One way that schools have approached tackling “success” and this high stakes testing dilemma is through tracking and gifted and talented programs (Goert & Duffy, 2003). From its inception, GT and tracking programs have been tied to IQ (Hollingsworth, 1942) and have focused on those who score well on standardized tests (see Witty, 1951; Morelock, 1996), and almost primarily serve middle-class white students, which in itself is an act of white supremacy. For example, none of the author's middle school and high school experience mirrored this type of educational segregation. The first author was tracked in the GT program specifically for an AP U.S. history course and was the only person of color in a class of 30. Such a ratio left him feeling confused precisely because the students in this course were not any smarter than students of color in his non-GT classes. More disconcerting was the fact that his school was 93% Latino but the GT classes were predominately white. Sadly, the first author expressed how the same phenomenon is happening to his thirteen year-old daughter now, nearly 25 years past his experiences.

The idea of gifted education has drifted in and out of vogue in American schools. It was elevated in the 1950s when educators and lawmakers pushed gifted programs in math and science amid fears about the rise of Communism and the Cold War (Sapon-Shevin, 2003). It waned in the 1960s, as desegregation took center stage, but re-emerged with a White House task force on giftedness and the signing of several federal bills in the 1970s that recognized gifted children's needs (Borland, 2003). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and now Race to the Top (RTTT) have once again elevated the need for GT, sorting and tracking programs, as test scores are paramount to measuring an administration and schools' success (Payne, 2011). Despite the affirmative nomenclatures, NCLB and RTTT, as currently executed and designed, can be seen as elitist and deceptively meritocratic, a type of educational triage that is intricately tied to race (Sapon-Shevin, 2003). It is through this process of sorting, based on perceived cognitive abilities and race that schools perpetuate what Sapon-Shevin (2003) says are "programs implemented for students whom educational failure will not be tolerated, generally the children of white, privileged parents" (p.129). Regardless of the time period, and how veiled (Du Bois, 1903), race, class, and the "color-line" are, pigmentation has always played a significant role in the GT discussion. Recently, a number of scholars have studied the issue of disproportionate representation of minority students in special education programs (see Salend & Duhaney, 2005; Townsend, 2002), explaining that often these placements have more to do with behavior issues than cognitive ability. Furthermore there is also significant research examining how race impacts access to GT programs (e.g. Bianco, 2005; Elhoweris, Mutua, Alsheikh, & Holloway, 2005; Ford & Webb, 1994; Maker, 1996; Renzulli, 2004; Borland, 2003). For example, Elhoweris, et al. (2005) studied the effects of students' ethnicity on teachers' educational decision making. Each group of teachers was provided a short case vignette describing a gifted child. One third of the teachers read a vignette describing a European American student, one third read a vignette describing an African American student, and one third served as a control group and received no information about the student's ethnicity. The results of this study indicated that the student's ethnicity did indeed make a difference in the teachers' referral decisions and skewed largely to the white students being placed in GT programs.

And while these issues are important and will be discussed in this paper, there seems to be a lack of research examining what Sapon-Shevin (2003) alluded to regarding *privileged parents*. What role do these parents play in the GT conversation? And does this parental interaction play a role in driving the racial disparities that permeate contemporary GT demographics?

Counter narrative/Testimony

With such racial disparity in DPS GT programs, a parent's ability to network comes into play when gaining access to GT, sorting, and tracking programs. Along with cultural capital, a family's social capital of contacts and networks permeates the environments of gifted children and affects their talent development. Since one of the authors is a parent of an identified DPS GT student, he attests to the power of contacts and social networking when it comes to entering GT

programs in DPS. When his daughter was entering kindergarten at DPS, he was required to complete a plethora of forms, one in particular inquired about the languages used in home. In his naiveté, his daughter's mother and he selected both English and Spanish, since they are fluent in both languages and both are used seamlessly in their homes. They thought that bilingualism would be seen positive. Little did they know that selecting one little box, nine years ago, would have such lasting impacts on their daughter and her perceived cognitive abilities.

Since selecting that box, every year their daughter has been asked to complete an English language proficiency exam and has been immediately placed in additional support classes for CLD students. In addition to proving her command of English, they have to lobby and defend her development because of her Spanish surname, as she is continually assumed to be average or below average. Despite numerous meetings with district administrators, teachers, and counselors, they have had to prove that their daughter is not only fluent but also advanced in certain subjects. Like many students, their daughter does not test well, however, when the pressure of high stakes testing is not eminent, she, like countless other students of color, embodies many of the 12 attributes of giftedness. Nevertheless, they still had to prove that she has these traits despite her tests, even though test scores are nowhere to be found on the DPS GT 12 Traits of Giftedness. Thankfully, both parents are able to lobby administration on her behalf. For their family, this political endeavor is a yearly occurrence and only possible, and more importantly successful, because both parents have degrees, flexible schedules, and the verbal wherewithal to engage in such dialogue. Admittedly, the author in this case, has had to pull out the "I am getting a PhD in Educational Studies and Research" card to yield capital on behalf of his daughter. This aligns with the notion that "when both parents are present at high levels, the results can be striking", (Ravitch, 2010, p. 100). Yet, many parents of color, whose children are equally, if not more, gifted and talented than her, cannot find the time or have the linguistic prowess to convince administration of their child's ability. This opportunity is usually only accessible to privileged parents, and in the case of DPS and their GT program, this often means white.

Racial Disparities in DPS Gifted and Talented Data

In order to have a discussion of the impact of white parental cultural capital on GT program in DPS, it is important to examine how GT is defined and what the current demographics are. According to the Denver Public Schools GT (2013) website:

“[G]ifted and talented children mean those students whose demonstrated abilities, talents and/or potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs. These students perform, or show the potential of performing, at remarkably high levels in intellectual, specific academic or creative areas when compared with others of their age and experience. Gifted and talented children are present in all student groups regardless of gender, disability, English language proficiency, economic status, and ethnic or cultural background” (par 2).

What is most intriguing about this definition is the overt verbiage around *equity*. This definition implies all students are equally considered gifted and talented and potentially able to benefit from these “special provisions”. They plainly acknowledge that giftedness is present in all student groups, regardless of any racial or cultural traits, traits that when examined oppositionally, allude to Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital as previously described. Nonetheless, a more nuanced understanding of GT is necessary in order to explain this racial discrepancy in DPS. The DPS GT website expands on the aforementioned definition by providing a chart of the “12 Traits of Giftedness”. Figure 1 describes the traits as defined and listed on the DPS Gifted and Talented website (retrieved from: <http://gt.dpsk12.org/>). The traits include: motivation, interests, communication skills, problem-solving, memory, inquiry/curiosity, insight, reasoning, imagination/creativity, humor, intensity, and sensitivity.

Much like the brief definition of giftedness listed above, the chart is clear and overtly explains what the traits are, how they look, and importantly what these traits may look like for culturally and linguistically diverse (CDL) students. When reading over these traits, one may be encouraged, as it appears that they are general enough to include all students regardless of gender, disability, English language proficiency, economic status, ethnic or cultural background. None of the traits seem mutually exclusive to any particular race. Yet, as Ford (2003) suggests, the field of GT remains responsible for the underrepresentation of minority students and continually focuses on a “unitary conception of giftedness” which almost always means “white” (p. 157). The DPS GT website seems to admonish this sentiment, as they go to great lengths to show that giftedness is found in all students. With that said, with such overtly inclusive rhetoric, one could make the assumption that the DPS GT demographics should closely resemble their actual population numbers. Essentially, participation in GT programs should be racially diverse.

So what does the DPS gifted population look like for the 2011-12 school year? Do the numbers reinforce the over-arching vision of the DPS GT Department? According to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Data Lab webpage (2013), out of a total population of 76,243 kids in grades K-12, 12.79 percent meet some sort of GT classification. This is three times greater than the 6 percent national estimate of GT kids and in a more challenging demographic population. This is encouraging, as DPS identifies more students with GT attributes than other districts throughout the nation. However, the encouragement wanes as a more detailed examination is conducted. It is important to look at the GT information specific to variables that historically play a role in marginalization and discriminating.

When looking at income, 13 percent of low-income kids in Denver are labeled GT, while 35 percent of students who do not qualify for free and reduced price lunch are in talented and gifted programs. In other words, more than one in every three kids not in poverty in DPS is classified as GT. Therefore, if you are considered to live near or below the poverty line your chances of being deemed GT are 66% less. Moving beyond class, an examination around the intersection of race and ethnicity is necessary.

As a percentage of the total population, ethnicity breaks down as follows:

- American Indian .58 percent,
- Asian 4.73 percent,
- Black or African American 7.85 percent,
- Latino 44.37%,
- White 37.97%,
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander .18 percent, and
- Two or More Races 4.43 percent.

When examining the data by race, Black students make up seven percent of GT classifications, which is not far off from their total population in DPS schools. However, the numbers for Hispanic are far more alarming. Hispanics/Latinos and white students (make up 82 percent of the sample) and they breakdown as such: 9.75 percent of all Hispanic/Latino students are labeled GT, compared to 24% of all white students. White students are thus three times as likely as Black students to be classified as gifted and talented, and overt two times as likely as Hispanic students to be classified as gifted and talented. What is alarming for Latino students in DPS is that despite making up over 44% of the total student population, they only represent 9 percent of GT students. It could be argued that language or perhaps wealth plays a role in this disparity. However, as Allen (2009) discusses, often when issues of race, racism, and inequality arise, many whites will exclaim what about poor white people, which is a semantic move (Bonilla-Silva &Embrick, 2006) to engage in a class discussion rather than race or how class impacts race. This tactic is generally made to make the point that poor whites have it just as bad as poor people of color, thus minimizing the race factor. Therefore it is imperative to look at this data considering for both race and income.

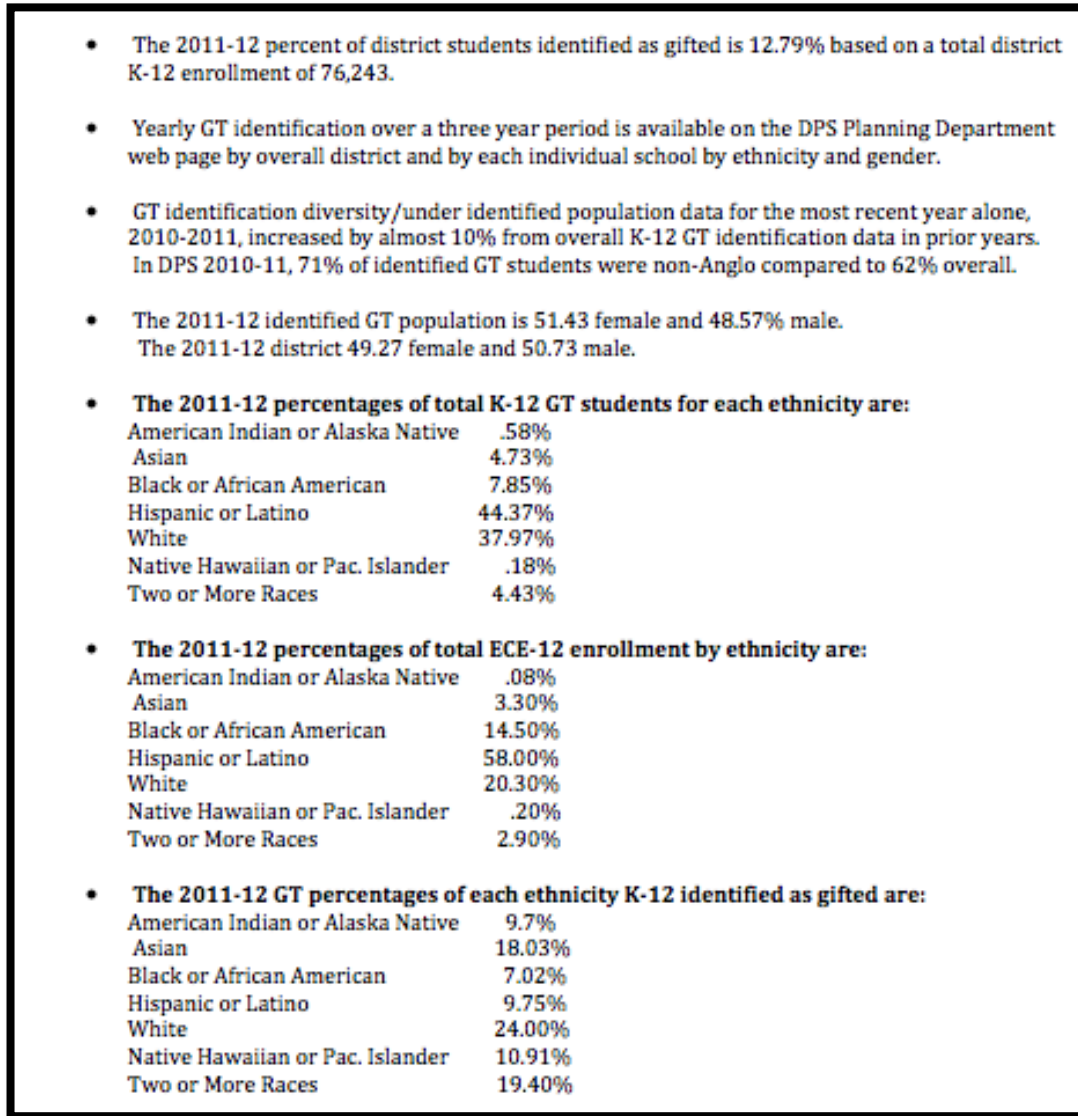
For low-income students, gifted and talented percentages are 9 percent for Black kids, 13 percent for Hispanic/Latino kids and 21 percent for white kids. For students who do not receive meal assistance, approximate gifted and talented percentages are 15 percent of Black kids, 25 percent of Hispanic/Latino kids and 45 percent of white kids. Hence, low-income white kids are roughly twice as likely as low-income children of color to be classified as gifted and talented. As Bell (1992) state in his book *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*, “Black people are the magical faces at the bottom of society’s well. Even the poorest whites, those who must live their lives only a few levels above, gain their self-esteem by gazing down on us” (p. xiv). While Bell was referring specifically to Black people, the sentiment and idea is that poor whites hold a higher level of esteem and therefore an elevated cultural capital.

Below is a table illustrating these numbers (CDE School View Data Center, 2013).

Gifted and Talented Percentages by Race

Figure 2.

Demographics of the Denver Public Schools gifted population compared to the total student enrollment of the administrative unit (<http://www.schoolview.org/>)



Sadly, issues around race and wealth are further exacerbated when looking at single-parent family homes. As the Losing Ground (2013) report states:

“While many single parents raise thriving, productive children, the growing trend of fatherless homes has enormous implications for future generations. Children raised in female-headed homes in Colorado are four times more likely to live in poverty than those from married-couple homes, according to the I-News analysis. Other studies show they are less likely to go to college or even graduate high school (p. 21).”

Despite all these factors and even though, poor whites hold significantly less cultural capital and standing than their wealthy counterparts; they still hold a privileged status compared to low income students of color.

The Impact of White Parental Cultural Capital on GT Programs

In the study of social stratification and examining veiled education inequities, Bourdieu's work has inspired a body of empirical research on the origins and effects of cultural capital. As discussed, this is usually operationalized as an individual's knowledge of or access to cultural resources (e.g., DiMaggio, 1982). Bourdieu asserts that schools offer the primary institutional setting for production, transmission, and accumulation of the various forms of cultural capital, especially for parents who have acquired more of it. He treats cultural capital as cumulative, arguing that the greater the early endowment, the easier the further attainments. While not overtly describing U.S. society, or whiteness for that matter, he does insinuate that there are unearned (McIntosh, 1988) components embedded and embodied in cultural capital. Family preference for high culture, verbal fluency, and upper-class personal tastes and presentation (habitus), according to this theory, provide "presumed" gifted children with cultural resources that are rewarded in school and among educators, mentors and caretakers in talent domains. Sociologists have investigated how differences in cultural capital reinforce inequality (see DiMaggio, 1982; Swartz, 1997). Yet, how do kids exercise such power in spaces that render them in less powerful relational positions? In U.S. public schools, there is generally a distinct power dynamic between teacher and student. Rarely, are the lines between educator and learner blurred as Freire (1970) directed in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. This is where privileged parents play an integral role. They not only make their presence known in schools but also enable their children to do the same. Merton (1988) refers to this as the "Matthew Effect" or accumulation of advantage. Wealthy white kids, by means of their parents, are indoctrinated with this sense of value, agency, and entitlement. They not only exercise their parents' cultural capital but also serve as an extension and physical representation of their parents' status. Whereas, for many parents of students of color, the simple act of being a parent and having children can be seen as negative and stereotypical, thus perpetuating the 'hyper-fertile' 'mother of color myth' (see Gutiérrez, 2008).

Conclusion and Recommendations: Envisioning a More Just GT Programs

After studying, researching the foundations of urban education and examining the veiled DPS GT programs, we, the authors, understand that education should be the great equalizer. It should be the one place in our society where everyone has the same opportunity. Woefully, this is not the case. It should not be that just because one's parents have more money or that she/he comes from a more affluent background that she/he gets better educational opportunities, like access to gifted and talented programs. That is completely unjust. This veiled discrimination is exactly how DPS and countless other districts operate. Those with the most cultural capital, again

usually white families, will be afforded opportunities and advancements that are not always warranted. The myth that surrounds gifted and talented programs is that those students who gain access are indeed special, highly intelligent, and embody traits that include: motivation, interests, communication skills, problem-solving, memory, inquiry/curiosity, insight, reasoning, imagination/creativity, humor, intensity, and sensitivity. Since the majority of the gifted students in DPS are white, they are perceived to have ownership of these traits and are generally assumed to be intelligent. Often these traits are not always observed and displayed but communicated by extremely influential parents who have vast amounts of cultural capital (Borland, 2003). And those students who are not deemed worthy of GT are left wondering if they have any of these advanced cognitive traits. Since most of the authors are former K-12 students of color once labeled GT, we continue to struggle with this to this day, despite some of us holding a doctoral degree and others working towards one. This negative triple-consciousness is having detrimental impacts for students of color and has created a school system that is more segregated than during the times of *Brown v. Board of Ed* (Tatum, 2007). As Ravitch (2011) warns, regarding the inequity of education, “[T]he pattern will persist so long as the social conditions remain unchanged, so long as there are districts and schools with intense concentrations of students who are both racially segregated and impoverished” (p. 287). DPS GT programs are microcosms of this type of segregation. They reward based on privilege, influence, capital, and power. Until these attributes are mitigated we will continue to not only see gross inequities in GT programs, but all education.

In order to mitigate these inequities, we recommend that school districts dial back separate gifted programs in favor of personalized/differentiated and more challenging curriculum for all kids in every class. We call on educators to create differentiated classrooms that celebrate all children’s funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Tomlinson, 2014) and call for an end to racially segregated GT programs. We contend, with the right structure, one teacher can accelerate learning for the highly gifted in an integrated classroom without separating them from other students. We understand that differentiated instruction, as an alternative to gifted programs, is not a new idea. However we argue that critical and socially just differentiation blends and incorporates multiple ways of knowing rather than isolating them and moves away from historically valued white hegemonic epistemologies.

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Trait, Aptitude, or Behavior	General Description	How It May Look	CLD (Culturally & Linguistically Diverse) Considerations
Motivation Evidence of desire to learn.	Internal drive or encouragement that initiates, directs, or sustains individual or group behavior in order to satisfy a need or attain a goal.	Demonstrates persistence in pursuing or completing self-selected tasks (may be culturally influenced); evident in school or non-school activities. Enthusiastic learner; has aspirations to be somebody, to do something.	Competitiveness may not be valued. Group achievement may be valued over individual accomplishment.
Interests Intense, sometimes unusual, interests.	Activities, avocations, objects, etc. that have special worth or significance and are given special attention.	Unusual or advanced interests, topic, or activity; self-starter; pursues an activity unceasingly beyond the group.	Some students may prefer teacher-directed learning. In some other cultures, individual choice is preferred for learning activities.
Communication Skills Highly expressive with words, numbers, or symbols.	Transmission and reception of signals or meanings through a system of symbols (codes, gestures, language, and numbers).	Unusual ability to communicate (verbally, nonverbally, physically, artistically, symbolically); uses particularly apt examples, illustrations, or elaborations.	May see strong interpersonal skills or a preference for unassertive or indirect ways of self-expression. May prefer to use collective ideas.
Problem-Solving Ability Effective, often inventive, strategies for recognizing and solving problems.	Process of determining a correct sequence of alternatives leading to a desired goal or to successful completion of a performance task.	Unusual ability to devise or adopt a systematic strategy to solve problems and to change the strategy if it is not working; creates new designs; inventor.	May prefer community-based problem-solving.
Memory Large storehouse of information on school or non-school topics.	Exceptional ability to retain and retrieve information.	Already knows; needs only 1 – 2 repetitions for mastery; has a wealth of information about school and non-school topics; pays attention to details; manipulates information.	What the student chooses to memorize may be different from teacher's expectations. May use stories & legends as a memory tool.
Inquiry/Curiosity Questions, experiments, explores.	Method or process of seeking knowledge, understanding, or information.	Asks unusual questions for age; plays around with ideas; extensive exploratory behaviors directed toward eliciting information about materials, devices, or situations.	Sometimes not as highly values in other cultures – may prefer teacher direction.
Insight Quickly grasps new concepts; sees connections; senses deeper meanings.	Sudden discovery of correct solution following attempts based primarily on trial and error; putting disparate elements together in unexpected ways.	Exceptional ability to draw inferences; appears to be a good guesser; is keenly observant; heightened capacity for seeing unusual and diverse relationships, integration of ideas and disciplines.	May be intuitive or holistic thinkers.

Reasoning Logical approaches to figuring out solutions.	Highly conscious, directed, controlled, active, intentional forward-looking, and goal-oriented thought.	Ability to make generalizations and use metaphors and analogies; can think things through in a logical manner; critical thinker; ability to think things through and come up with a plausible answer.	May demonstrate problem-solving in group setting, rather than individually. Some cultures value approximation over accuracy.
Imagination/Creativity Produces many ideas; highly original.	Process of forming mental images of objects; qualities, situations, or relationships which aren't immediately apparent to the senses; problem solving through nontraditional patterns of thinking.	Shows exceptional ingenuity in using everyday materials; is keenly observant; has wild, seemingly silly ideas; fluent, flexible producer of ideas; highly curious.	May be demonstrated through storytelling, dancing, writing, art, poetry, or creative thinking.
Humor Conveys and picks up on humor well.	Ability to synthesize key ideas or problems in complex situations in a humorous way; exceptional sense of timing in words or gestures.	Keen sense of humor that may be gentle or hostile; large accumulation of information about emotions; capacity for seeing unusual; uncommon emotional depth; openness to experiences; sensory awareness.	Need to be aware that humor is culturally-based.
Intensity ("Overexcitabilities") Strength of reactions, responses, behaviors. (The term "overexcitabilities" comes from Polish psychologist Dabrowski.)	Very strong, even extreme, responses to stimuli in five areas: emotional, intellectual, sensory, psychomotor, and imagination.	Intense desire for experiences in the area(s) of overexcitability; powerful emotions; seeks intellectual stimulation; sensory experiences evoke strong responses; constant or repetitive movement or gesturing; intense fantasy life; may need creative outlets for intensity.	Individual drive may not be highly valued. Some cultures have a preference for novelty and personal freedom.
Sensitivity Strong reactions to emotional stimuli.	Events and situations in the affective and social domains elicit a stronger response than usual.	Strong sense of compassion; keen sense of justice; empathy; moral and ethical sensibilities; sense of being "different" socially; existential worrying; often overly self-critical.	May demonstrate a keen sense of injustice, awareness of the environment & people around them, or personal & religious integrity.

Figure 1

Twelve Traits of Giftedness: A Non-Biased Profile

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Notes

ⁱ Roberto Montoya is a Ph.D. student and lecturer with teaching and research interests in CRT, LatCrit, Critical Whiteness Studies, feminist perspectives, Hip Hop pedagogy, and performance. He is the fatherscholar to his children: Mireya (14), Miles (2) and Maxwell (5 months).

ⁱⁱ Cheryl Matias's teaching focus is in Urban Community Teacher Education and her research interests include CRT, Critical Whiteness Studies, and Black feminist perspectives. She is a motherscholar of eight-year-old twins.

ⁱⁱⁱ Naomi Nishi's teaching and research interests are in racial inclusivity, the deconstruction of Whiteness in the higher education classroom using CRT and Critical Whiteness Studies. She is the motherscholar to two boys: Linus (3) and Benjamin (8 months).

^{iv} Geneva Sarcedo is a Ph.D. student and academic advisor whose professional experience influences her research interests in advising best practices for first generation and low income college students.

^v Losing Ground Study conducted by I-News journalists analyzed six decades of reports from the U.S. Census Bureau to track the Colorado poverty rates, family income, high school and college graduation rates and home ownership. The analysis uncovered surprising trends in racial and ethnic disparities.

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